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SUBJECT: U.N. UNDER SECRETARY GUEHENNO VISIT TO THE DRC

Classified By: Ambassador Roger Meece for Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: In October 21 remarks to the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT), U.N. Peacekeeping Under Secretary Guehenno said that his visit to the DRC was intended to review how MONUC could best utilize its limited resources. Overall, the U.N.,s objective is to ensure a credible electoral process, and establish a sound foundation for the post-electoral period. Guehenno emphasized that the unity and continued engagement of the international community is also an essential component to keep the DRC,s transition on track. The British, French, Belgian and U.S. Ambassadors discussed with Guehenno in an earlier meeting the need to move Congolese politicians to understand the need for some degree of power-sharing in a successful political system. During his visit, Guehenno generally seemed to maintain a positive tone, albeit with occasional references to the UNSC,s failure to embrace fully the SYG,s recommendations for MONUC expansion. End summary.

2. (SBU) U.N. Under Secretary for Peacekeeping Operation Jean-Marie Guehenno concluded a five day visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with an October 21 meeting with the 17 member International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT). In his remarks to the CIAT, Guehenno observed that the most recent resolution of the U.N. Security Council, UNSC Res. 1565 authorizing a 5,900 person expansion of MONUC, did not provide all the resources to do everything requested of MONUC. His visit was therefore designed to discuss with UN SRSG Bill Swing, his staff, and GDRC officials how best to utilize the resources that will be available.

3. (SBU) Guehenno stated that the U.N.,s overall objective in the DRC is to ensure a credible electoral process, and establish a solid foundation for the post-electoral period. This means that there is a political process that must run in parallel with election preparations to ensure that successful elections can be held and the results respected. In addition, it is important to see progress in the security environment.

4. (SBU) Guehenno also emphasized that the unity of the international community be maintained as much as possible. This has already been demonstrated as an essential component to keep the DRC transition process on track, and is most visible in the CIAT. Guehenno noted in this regard that the September 22 senior-level meeting of CIAT members in New York had represented a useful symbolic reinforcement of international community engagement and common intent. Guehenno elaborated by noting several areas where strong continued international engagement, and often pressure, is needed. Among the specific areas Guehenno identified was security sector reform, including disarmament and reintegration/repatriation programs, much of which is still lacking resources and political will within parts of the GDRC. Building a viable police structure is another area.

5. (SBU) The overall election process remains the centerpiece of the transition, but Guehenno underscored that even successful elections per se will not solve all problems. Nonetheless, significant progress in elections planning as well as in associated areas has been seen. Guehenno observed that there are strong popular expectations in the DRC about elections, and major delays run the risk of a explosive negative reaction.

6. (C) Guehenno observed that CIAT ambassadors have a dual role, accredited in a traditional role as representatives of their governments to the President and GDRC government, but also in this case acting as representatives to the full &Espace Presidentiel8 (note: President Kabila plus four Vice Presidents who represent the range of political components participating in the transition process). Guehenno also spoke of MONUC,s intent to facilitate establishment of three CIAT thematic commissions consistent with the recent DRC discussions in New York. These are to deal with elections, security sector reform, and needed legislation, which includes preparation of a proposed new constitution.

7. (C) Briefly summarizing MONUC's immediate plans regarding expansion, Guehenno reported that 3 brigades are to be assigned to the eastern portion of the country (Ituri district and the two Kivu provinces). A new field headquarters is to be established in Kisangani for the east,

which will also have a reserve element. New forces are expected to arrive over the next three months. Regarding the foreign armed forces, i.e. ex-FAR, Interahamwe and the FLDR, it will be MONUC,s intent to deploy forces to areas now considered relatively easy for these groups to disrupt or "destabilize" their operations, providing a greater opportunity for success for FARDC operations to spark a new wave of disarmament and repatriations to Rwanda.

18. (C) During a question and answer period, SRSg Swing reported that the Joint Verification Mechanism (JVM) implementation between the DRC and Rwanda had been delayed because of the high level of tension in South Kivu occasioned by the unexpected return of large number of Congolese refugees from Burundi. Among the various protests, a MONUC APC which had broken down in Bukavu had been attacked by a mob (note: as reported in Embassy and DATT reporting). MONUC,s judgment was the risk of an incident with Rwandan officers in the DRC was too high in the immediate aftermath of these problems. Nonetheless, he intended for JVM operations to get underway before the end of the month. Swing reported that he is scheduled to meet October 22 with Rwandan JVM representative Amb. Richard Sezibera, currently in Kinshasa participating in planning for the November Great Lakes Conference, and with GDRC representative Amb. Antoine Ghonda to discuss the issue.

19. (C) The French Ambassador hosted an October 20 breakfast for Guehenno with the British, Belgian, and U.S. Ambassadors, as well as SRSg Swing. During the breakfast, the four Ambassadors discussed with Guehenno the importance of moving the Congolese away from the traditional model characterized by "one man" politics and "winner controls all" mentality to some understanding of the need for power sharing in successful political systems. While this is difficult to do, and certainly many in the DRC political class are locked in to the old style of thinking, there is a very broad desire to get away from the Mobutu-style system, and there are some glimmers of more enlightened thinking. It will be important for all engaged players, including MONUC and concerned members of the international community to assist political leaders to understand that they have a stake in a successful transition process, including elections.

10. (C) Comment: At least in his comments to foreign diplomats, Guehenno did not break much new ground, reiterating what is already accepted general MONUC policy consistent with that of the CIAT. He generally maintained a positive tone, albeit interspersed with occasional references to the UNSC,s failure to embrace fully the SYG,s recommendations for a much bigger expansion of the MONUC operation and mandate. Guehenno,s visit was scheduled only at the last minute, and he may well have had other agendas as well internal to MONUC. From our perspective, IO A/S Holmes is fortuitously scheduled for a five-day visit with arrival in Kinshasa on October 28, providing us a good opportunity to follow up regarding current MONUC plans and operations, and to underscore USG views. End comment.

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